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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

PAYING TRIBUTE — Thousands traveled to Bellevue Baptist Church's auditorium for the funeral of Adrian Rogers, the church's longtime pastor. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

Adrian Rogers memorialized at funeral

CORDOVA, Tenn. (BP) — A golden, 8-foot shepherd's staff leaned against the casket. Inside, next to the body of Adrian Rogers, was his open Bible. He had scribbled notes in the margins and highlighted verses, including Psalm 112:1-6, which concludes: "Surely he shall not be moved forever: The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

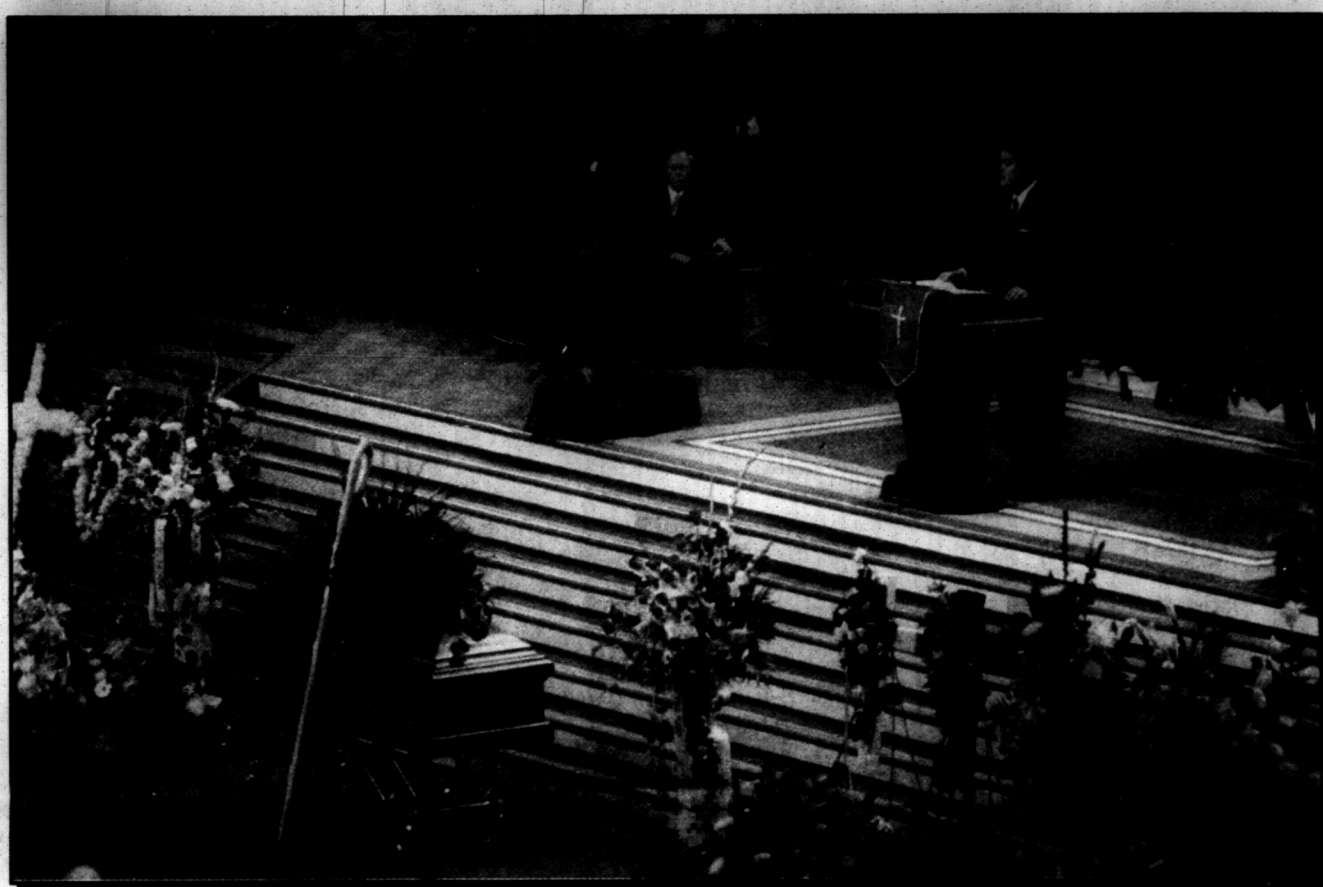
Thousands at Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, gathered November 17, to remember retired Bellevue pastor and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leader Rogers: their pastor, their family member, their mentor, their friend.

Rogers died November 15 at age 74 after a struggle with cancer and double pneumonia.

In March, masses packed Bellevue Church to celebrate the life and ministry of Rogers, who retired after serving the church as pastor for 32 years. Thursday evening, just eight months later, they returned to say goodbye.

Throughout the service, speakers recalled Rogers' loving adoration of his family, his kindness and his sense of humor. They remembered Rogers as a man who refused to compromise God's Word, who preached it unashamedly and who desired more than anything to see lost people "come to Jesus."

"He was my hero, my knight in shining armor, who was always there to slay my dragons," said Janice Edmiston, Rogers' daughter. "My comforter through the hardest of times. My coun-



FAREWELL, FOR NOW — Steve Gaines (at pulpit), Adrian Rogers' successor as pastor at Bellevue Church in suburban Memphis, told the thousands attending the longtime pastor's funeral service on November 17 that Rogers has "won the victory." (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

selor whose words were a deep well of wisdom that I could draw freely from."

Edmiston spoke of the love between Rogers and his wife Joyce, "one of the greatest love stories this world has ever known." Rogers never dated another girl. He often said that he and Joyce met in the fourth grade but didn't get serious until the sixth grade.

Edmiston also recalled her father's contagious positive spirit, and his ability to put a positive spin on everything — even the cancer that would eventually claim his life.

"This is good for me," Edmiston recalled her father saying about the cancer. "It's given me something to focus on, kind of like a hobby."

Her emotional eulogy was her "tell-all" story about her father, but Edmiston said it wasn't sufficient to communicate the truth.

"Of everything that has been said today about my daddy's character, his love and his greatness — take that, multiply it by 100, and yet the half has not been told," she said. "And when he stepped over into glory,

although it left a hole in my heart the size of the Grand Canyon, we are comforted to know that our loss is heaven's gain."

The two-hour service also included a eulogy from Rogers' son, David, who said he learned from his father generosity, a love for God's Word, acceptance of others, and courage. "I've learned what it means to take a stand when the easiest thing was to stay quiet," he said.

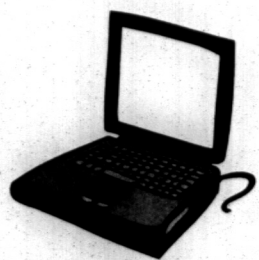
Other speakers included James Whitmire and Bob Sorrell, who served on staff with Rogers for years; longtime friends Joe Boatwright and Peter Lord; pastors Jerry Vines and Ken Whitten; and James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family.

Steve Gaines, Rogers' successor as Bellevue's pastor, preached the message and compared Rogers to the biblical Samuel. Rogers was a prophetic, wise, prayerful preacher, the Mississippi native said, who has now reaped the reward for his life's service.

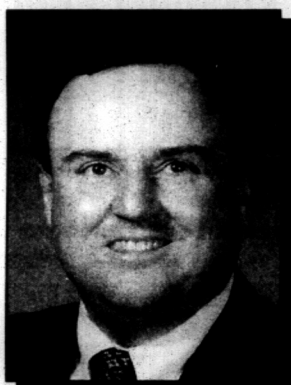
"As Dr. Vines has said, we don't grieve as those who have no hope," Gaines said. "We know that just as surely as Jesus died and rose from the dead, Adrian Rogers is alive. He has entered the gates of pearl... All of life's heartaches, including cancer, have been forgotten. He has won the victory."

Editor's note: For extensive coverage of the life and passing of Adrian Rogers, go online to www.sbc Baptist Press.org.





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Here's a little pop quiz: Do you remember the rallying cry for moving Gulf Coast casinos off the water and 800-plus feet on to land after Hurricane Katrina? If you said, "Jobs! Jobs! Jobs!," go to the head of the class.

Governor Barbour and certain members of the Mississippi (see list below) told us they feared the casinos would take thousands of jobs and go elsewhere unless they were allowed to rebuild on land instead of over the water. The gamblers backed them up by strongly implying that they would leave the coast a devastated mess and move on unless they were allowed to expand onto land.

Vested interests in the banking, real estate, tourism, and economic development businesses quickly fell into line. The Legislature and the Governor, of course, caved to the gamblers with extraordinary speed and focus in the fifth special session of the year (count 'em, five).

Pro-gambling elements in the news media, which receive millions of dollars each year in casino advertising, were especially vicious when using the

A different attitude



jobs issue to shred opponents of gambling expansion like the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

"But waging a fight against allowing the gaming that has been legal in the state for far longer than a decade to reopen across the highway from original establishments and provide good jobs for thousands on the Coast who need them seems ill-conceived," said Sid Salter, the pro-gambling Perspective section editor at The Clarion-Ledger in Jackson, in a September 28 column.

Salter's goal, as he pointed out in the column, was to "deflate some of the religious demagoguery being interjected into the debate of how the ravaged Gulf Coast rebuilds and how the 15,000 residents there employed by the gaming industry can get back to work."

Aside from the fact that Salter and others like him in the gambling/ political complex consider Mississippi Baptist leadership to be nothing more than people who "make use of popular prejudices and false claims and promises in order to gain power" (the Webster's Dictionary definition of demagoguery), events since the enactment of the land-based gambling legislation are proving how wrong they are even about the jobs issue.

The Clarion-Ledger on November 9 published an article entitled, "Hurricane cash may fund new casino in St. Louis," which described Pinnacle Entertainment's plans to take insurance payouts from its destroyed Casino Magic facility on the Gulf Coast and

plow the money into a lucrative new casino the company is building in St. Louis, Mo.

"We're obligated to build in St. Louis; we're not obligated to build in Biloxi. St. Louis definitely takes priority," said Pinnacle Chairman and Chief Executive Daniel Lee in the article, as quoted from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

That's quite a different attitude being expressed now, after the gamblers got everything they wanted from our state leaders, isn't it?

In another blow to the Gulf Coast's recovery, Isle of Capri management has announced that it intends to relocate its corporate headquarters from Biloxi to St. Louis to take advantage of the "location and quality of life" there, according to a company official quoted in a November 18 article in The Clarion-Ledger.

Are we all beginning to get the picture here? The gamblers will say or do or promise anything they have to in order to get their way, and then they'll go about their business as they please with little regard to the consequences of their actions on the people of Mississippi — and too many of our state's leaders continue to openly serve them in spite of that fact.

Why do they do it? Now, that's a pop quiz question we can all ask our legislators and Governor.

How legislators voted on land-based gambling (HB 45)

* denotes member of a Mississippi Baptist church

House of Representatives YEA-60 (for land-based gambling)

Name	City	District
Akins, Noel*	Oxford	12
Bailey, Willie	Greenville	49
Baker, Mark	Brandon	74
Banks, Earle	Jackson	67
Bentz, Leonard	Biloxi	116
Blackmon Jr., Edward	Canton	57
Broomfield, Billy	Moss Point	110
Brown, Cecil	Jackson	66
Burnett, Clara	Tunica	9
Calhoun, Credell	Jackson	68
Carlton, Virginia*	Columbia	100
Clark, Bryant	Pickens	47
Clarke, Alyce	Jackson	69
Coleman, Linda	Mound Bayou	29
Coleman, Mary	Jackson	65
Compretta, J.P.	Bay St. Louis	122
Davis, Lee Jarrell	Hattiesburg	102
Dedeaux, Dirk*	Gulfport	95
Denny, Bill	Jackson	64
Espy III, Henry	Clarksdale	26
Evans, James	Jackson	70
Flags Jr., George	Vicksburg	55
Fredericks, Frances	Gulfport	110
Guice Jr., Daniel	Ocean Springs	114
Hamilton, Frank	Hurley	109
Harrison, Esther	Columbus	41
Hinds Sr., John	Greenville	50
Holland, Steve	Plantersville	16
Holloway Sr., Gregory	Hazlehurst	76
Ishee, Roger	Gulfport	118
Janus, Michael	Biloxi	117
Johnson III, Robert	Natchez	94
Malone, Bennett	Carthage	45
Martinson, Rita	Madison	58
Mayhall Jr., W.T.	Southaven	40
Mayo, John	Clarksdale	25
Moak, Bobby*	Bogue Chitto	53
Moore, John*	Brandon	60
Morris, Leonard	Batesville	11
Myers, David	McComb	98
Norquist, David	Cleveland	28
Patterson, Randall	Biloxi	115
Peranich, Diane	Pass Christian	121
Read, John*	Gautier	112
Reeves, John*	Jackson	71
Robinson Jr., Walter	Bolton	63

Simpson Jr., James*	120
Smith, Clayton*	59
Smith, Ferr	27
Snowden, Greg*	83
Staples, Gary	88
Straughter, Rufus	51
Thomas, Sara	31
Upshaw, Jessica	95
Watson, Percy	103
Whittington, May	34
Woods, Tommy	52
Young Sr., Charles	82
Zuber III, Hank	113

Name	City	District
Aldridge, Brian*	Tupelo	17
Arinder, Tracy	Morton	75
Baker, Larry*	Senatobia	8
Barnett, Jim	Brookhaven	92
Beckett, Jim*	Bruce	23
Bondurant, Sidney	Grenada	24
Bounds, Scott*	Philadelphia	44
Buck, Kelvin	Holly Springs	5
Chism, Gary*	Columbus	37
Cummings, Ricky	Luka	1
Dickson, Reecy	Macon	42
Eaton, Bo*	Taylorville	79
Ellington, Jim*	Raymond	73
Fillingane, Joey*	Sumrall	101
Fleming, Erik	Jackson	72
Formby, Mark*	Picayune	109
Franks Jr., Jamie	Mooreville	19
Frierson, Herb*	Poplarville	106
Gadd, Jack	Hickory Flat	13
Gibbs, David	West Point	36
Gregory, James*	Louisville	43
Gunn, Philip*	Clinton	56
Hamilton, Eugene	Olive Branch	6
Horne, Steve*	Meridian	81
Howell, Bobby*	Kilmichael	46
Hudson, Joey*	Monticello	91
Jennings, Wanda	DeSoto	7
Lott, Mike*	Petal	104
Markham Jr., J.B.	G'wood Springs	20
McBride, Warner*	Courtland	10
McCoy, Billy*	Rienzi	3
Miles, Bill	Fulton	21
Mims V, Sam	McComb	97

Pass Christian	120
Brandon	59
Carthage	27
Meridian	83
Laurel	88
Belzoni	51
Indianola	31
Diamondhead	95
Hattiesburg	103
Schlater	34
Byhalia	52
Meridian	82
Ocean Springs	113
Montgomery, Pat	15
Moss, Harvey*	2
Nicholson, Billy*	78
Parker, Deryk*	107
Reed, Dannie*	35
Reynolds, Tommy*	33
Robinson, Eric*	84
Rogers, Margaret	14
Rogers, Ray	61
Rotenberry, Clinton*	22
Smith, Jeff*	39
Stringer, Johnny	87
Sullivan, Preston*	22
Turner, Jerry	18
Vince, Robert	99
Walley, Shaun*	105
Ward, Greg	4
Warren, Joe	90
Weatherby, Tom*	62
Wells-Smith, Carmel*	111

Name	City	District
Ellis, Tyrone	Starkville	38
Perkins Sr., William	Greenwood	32
PRESENT		
Ellis, Tyrone	Starkville	38
Perkins Sr., William	Greenwood	32
NOT VOTING		
Huddleston, Robert	Sumner	30
Middleton, Chuck	Port Gibson	85
Scott, Omeria	Laurel	80
Shows, Bobby*	Ellisville	89

Name	City	District
Masterson, Chester	Vicksburg	54

Mississippi Senate YEA-29 (for land-based gambling)

Name	City	District
Albritton, Sid*	Picayune	40
Brown, Terry*	Columbus	17
Burton, Terry	Newton	31
Chaney, Mike	Vicksburg	23
Clarke, Buck	Hollandale	22
Cuevas, Scotty	Pass Christian	46
Davis, Doug*	Hernando	1
Dawkins, Debbie	Pass Christian	48
Dearing, Bob	Natchez	37
Doxey, Ralph	Holly Springs	2

Harden, Alice	Jackson	28
Hewes III, William	Gulfport	49
Hohn, John	Jackson	26
Huggins, Bunky	Greenwood	14
Jackson, Robert	Marks	11
Jackson II, Sampson	DeKalb	32
Jordan, David	Greenwood	24
Kirby, Dean*	Pearl	30
Lee, Ezell*	Picayune	47
Michel, Walter	Jackson	25
Moffat, Tommy	Gautier	52
Morgan, Ed*	Hattiesburg	45
Posey, Lynn*	Union Church	36
Robertson, Tommy	Moss Point	51
Ross, Charlie	Brandon	20
Simmons, William	Cleveland	13
Thames, Billy*	Mize	34
Walls Jr., Johnnie	Greenville	12
Williamson, Gloria	Philadelphia	18

Name	City	District
Browning, Nickey	Pontotoc	3
Bryan, Hob*	Amory	7
Butler, Kelvin	Magnolia	38
Carmichael, Videt*	Meridian	33
Flowers, Merle	Southaven	19
Frazier, Hillman	Jackson	27
Gordon, Jack*	Okolona	8
Hyde-Smith, Cindy*	Brookhaven	39
Jackson, Gary*	French Camp	15
King Jr., Tom*	Petal	44
Lee, Perry*	Mendenhall	35
Little, Travis*	Corinth	4
Mettel, Nolan	Sardis	10
Nunnelee, Alan*	Tupelo	6
Pickering, Stacey*	Soso	42
Thomas, Joseph	Yazoo City	21
Tollison, Gray	Oxford	9
Turner, Bennie	West Point	16
Walley, Shannon*	Leakesville	43
White, Richard*	Terry	29
Wilemon Jr., J.P.	Belmont	5
PRESENT		
Gollott, Tommy	Biloxi	50
ABSENT		
Harvey, Billy*	Prentiss	41

NOBTS to begin commuter classes in Jan.

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) will hold classes on its New Orleans campus starting in January, NOBTS President Chuck Kelley has announced. He also said that the May graduation ceremony will be held on campus in Leavell Chapel.

In addition to the classes on the New Orleans campus, a full range of course delivery systems will be offered in the spring semester for undergraduate and graduate students, including beefed-up offerings at extension centers, Internet courses, threaded discussion directed study courses, weekend classes and one-week academic workshops.

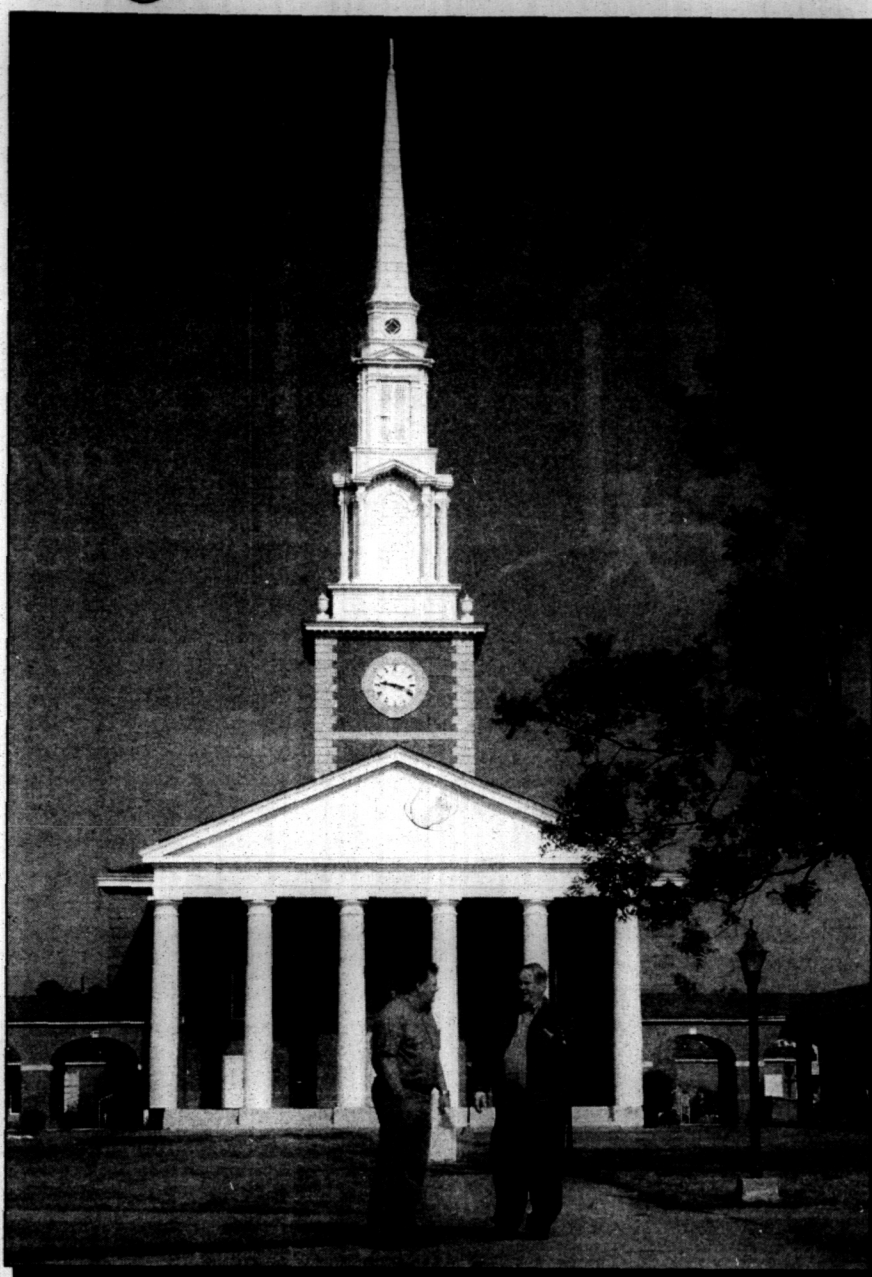
Because student housing will not be available in January, the courses are designed with commuter students in mind. The seminary will continue to offer a variety of study options during the spring semester for those who cannot commute to the main campus.

The announcement came during Kelley's recent trip to campus Nov. 10 to view restoration progress and his comments are posted in a letter to the seminary family at the school's website (www.nobts.edu).

"The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary campus is coming to life again. We've made amazing progress," Kelley said. "The campus is literally changing every week."

Kelley found the front block of campus in excellent condition. He said the main academic buildings are ready for use. According to Kelley, quick restoration work by the seminary's contractor, Mike Moskau, facilitated the early return of on-campus courses.

"We couldn't have gotten this far without Mike Moskau," Kelley said. "He has picked up on our



LOOKING TOWARD JANUARY — In view of commuter classes beginning in January, Chuck Kelley (right), president of New Orleans Seminary, and trustee William Hanberry of Hattiesburg talk outside Leavell Chapel. (BP photo by Gary D. Myers)

passion to get it done and he's found ways to make it happen."

Although a few classes at some extension centers begin

To facilitate the main campus courses, the John T. Christian Library, the president's office and many other campus offices will open in January. While student housing will not be available, on-campus housing will be available to staff members who return.

Because students remain scattered throughout the country, NOBTS will continue to offer an extensive schedule of online courses and threaded discussion courses. One-week academic workshops will be held in seven different locations in January, February, March and April; the locations include Atlanta; Birmingham, Ala.; Jacksonville, Fla.; and Orlando, Fla.

"It is an unbelievable task for our faculty, who are located all over the Southeast and Southwest, to be able to come together and develop this schedule," Steve Lemke, NOBTS provost, said. "The leadership of the deans and division chairs has been crucial in making this task possible."

As the on-campus January courses offer the first taste of normalcy for the NOBTS faculty, Kelley continued to praise the professors' work after the storm, noting that their flexibility helped the seminary through this difficult time.

Kelley said the seminary is on track to open some on-campus student housing units as early as April.

In May, Kelley said, summer workshops also will return to the New Orleans campus. Workshops will be held on campus in May, June, July and August. In August, he said, the campus will resume normal operations.

Complete spring classes schedules are available online at www.nobts.edu.

Newdow strikes again

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (BP) — Michael Newdow, the atheist whose challenge of the Pledge of Allegiance reached the United States Supreme Court, is now targeting "In God We Trust" on the country's currency. In a lawsuit filed November 17 in federal court in Sacramento, Ca., Newdow charged the national motto is unconstitutional and should be removed from the United States' paper money and coins. Newdow's suit claims "In God We Trust" violates both of the First Amendment's religion clauses, which ban government establishment of religion and infringement of the free exercise of religion. The suit also says the motto violates his free speech and equal protection rights. The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) will defend members of Congress in the suit, ACLJ Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow said. The national motto "is not only permissible, but constitutional as well," Sekulow said in a November 18 written statement. "In God We Trust" was placed on a U.S. coin for the first time in 1864 and on a bill first in 1957, according to the U.S. Treasury Department. Congress approved "In God We Trust" as the national motto in 1956. In 2004, Newdow argued before the Supreme Court that the phrase "under God" should be removed from the Pledge of Allegiance. The high court ruled Newdow did not have standing in the case, thereby leaving the pledge intact. Other plaintiffs have joined the physician-turned-lawyer in refiling a suit against the pledge, and they are awaiting a decision from a federal judge in Sacramento, according to The Bee. Newdow also challenged the prayer in President Bush's inauguration in January, but the late William Rehnquist, then the chief justice, rejected his emergency appeal from a lower court, which had denied his request.

Looking back

10 years ago

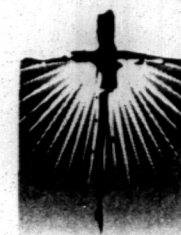
A five-year plan known as Celebrate Jesus 2000, designed to share the Gospel with every household in America, is being developed by the SBC's Home Mission Board in Atlanta.

20 years ago

First Church, Yazoo City, inaugurates its new 30-rank pipe organ with a dedication recital by William E. Gray Jr. of Waynesboro, who designed the organ for the church while employed by M. P. Moeller Pipe Organ Co. of Maryland.

50 years ago

Calvary Church, Jackson, leads the state in total gifts to the Cooperative Program with contributions of \$60,446.59 in 1954-55.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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Record THE BAPTIST

I AM SO THANKFUL

I trust that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving Day. Thanksgiving celebration in America is an unusual holiday. For whatever else it is morphed into, it is simply a day set aside where we as a nation can focus on the bountiful blessings that God has poured out upon us. Thanksgiving Day honors no great leader and transcends all races, denominations, political parties, and personal preferences. Even the ACLU has difficulty attacking Thanksgiving Day because while God may be implied in our giving of thanks, they have a hard time making Him a target to criticize.

The Apostle Paul gives us instruction on our giving of thanks in I Thessalonians 5:18. "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." His word to us is clear and concise. We are to be thankful all of the time about everything. How can you do that? If we look to the Lord and seek His guidance in all things even the things that don't look good and the things that are absolutely bad He can transform into something good. In a sense Paul is telling us to keep our eyes open and on the Lord to see what good He is doing in every situation.

So the Christian does not just focus on the problems but on the God who can handle all of our problems. In light of the admonition of scripture, I join with the Apostle Paul in giving thanks for all things even though some things do not look so good. Let me share with you some of the things for which I am thankful.

For one, I am thankful that we live in a land where being overweight is a far greater problem than starvation. I am keenly aware of the fact that obesity is a problem and it contributes to so many other medical problems, but I am also aware of the fact that starvation and malnutrition have their accompanying ailments also. If I had a choice between battling an enlarging waistline or fighting to find a morsel of food to sustain me for the next few hours, I would take the bounty. As we pause to thank God for our Thanksgiving meal, I am mindful of the fact

that we are an unusually blessed people here in America. We pause to pray realizing that our greater problem will be our tendency to overeat more than the problem of dying hungry.

Now honestly I am not trying to increase our load of guilt on top of our load of over indulgence, but it is a good thing to recognize the incredible far-reaching blessings of food and nourishment that God has provided for us. I am aware that some people do not have the finest of nourishment and may not have all of the food they would desire, but many of our poor in America live and eat better than those who are considered to be well off in some countries of the world.

The second thing for which I am thankful is while many in America have chosen to get abortions many more have chosen to bring a life into this world. Abortion and its sanction as a legal right in America is a terrible thing. Somewhere over one and a half million abortions that we know about take place every year in America. That number stands as a terrible testimony against the moral condition of our nation. But the other side of that picture is that somewhere between four and a half to five million babies come to live with us here in America. Some of them are born as wanted, planned for, and cherished human beings. Others of them may not have been planned for, the parents may be in a dilemma as to what to do to care for their needs, and yet they are willing to say, "We will make a way." Many of them are confident that God will provide a way. While we cannot and must not lose sight of the wrong that has been done and the disaster that abortion has inflicted on our country, at the same time we need to celebrate life as a renewed touch from God among us.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Finally, in light of the last three months here in Mississippi, I just want to say how thankful I am that there are fewer storm days throughout the year than there are wonderful sun shiny days. Katrina dealt a deadly and devastating blow to our country. Months passed her arrival we are still dealing with her chaos. By the same token I must put in perspective the reality that in history there has never been a storm like this before. Generations after generation of coastal lives have enjoyed the weather, the balmy breezes, and the year around good climate without a Katrina. God is good! He provides for us warmth and water, growing seasons and wintertime. Even in the days following Katrina

when it was so hot and muggy and we had no power and some other provisions; I was so grateful that the storm was not followed by more wind and water. Beyond just the conditions that came our way, I have been blessed, encouraged, challenged, and thrilled to see so many of our pastors, staff, church members, and folks who have come to know the Lord realize that through the conditions of the storm God has made Himself known and opportunities that were never before even seen have become realities. God is good and we can be thankful.

You may be reading this while in the midst of your own personal dilemma of life and wondering how you can give thanks in all things. Today trust God and look at your circumstances with the full knowledge that He loves you and that He is able to bring about good even out of the worst of conditions. Surrender your life to His will, watch, see His hand at work, and then give thanks!

The author may be contacted at
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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Is Your Van Safe? Send for a FREE CD!

Carpenter Bus Sales, the exclusive Bus Provider for LifeWay Church Buses, not only sells buses...we keep up with safety issues, legislation, regulations and insurance considerations... so you can make an informed purchase!

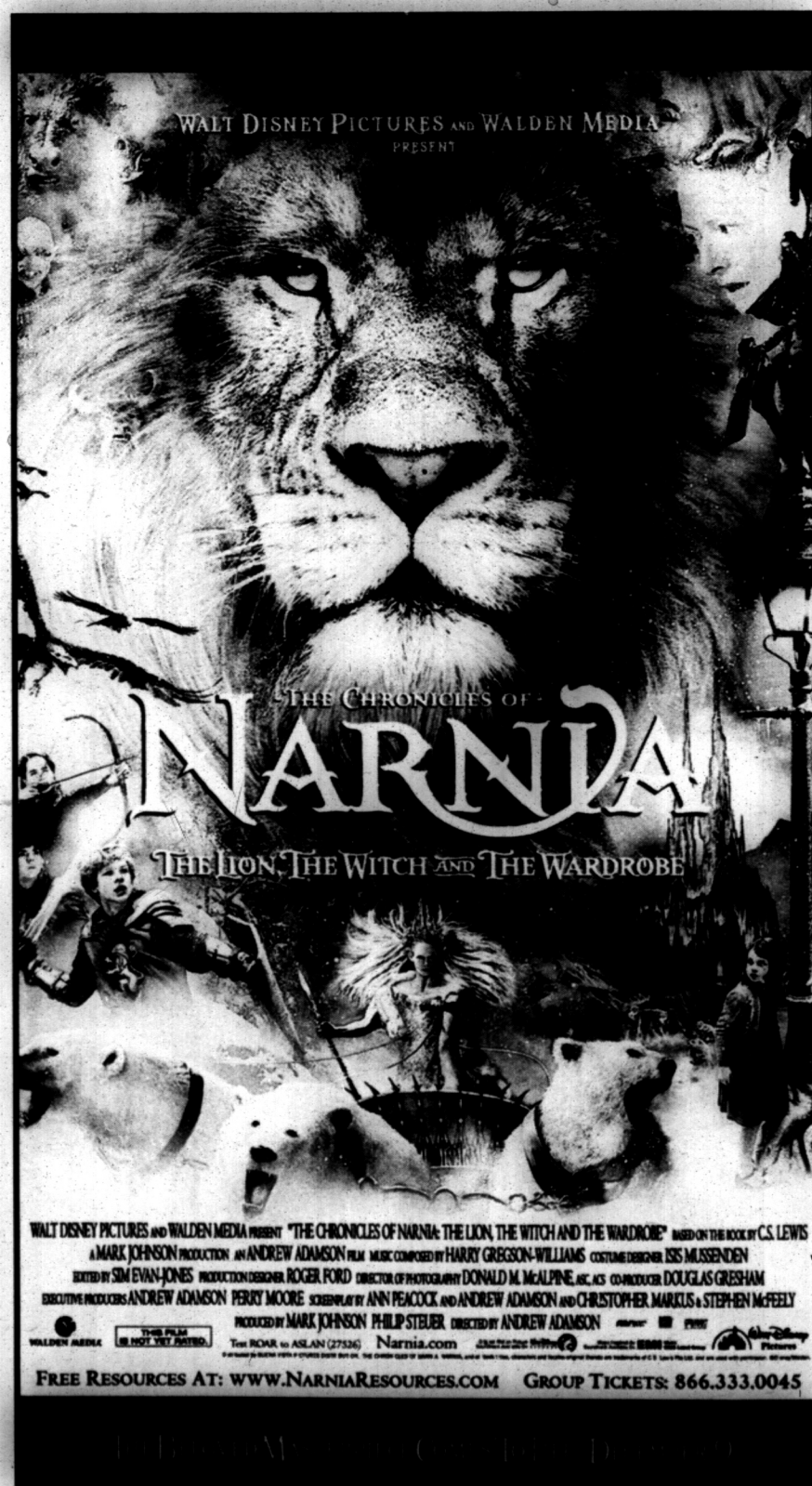


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ENDLESS PROMISES

Editor:

Please continue your opposition to extending gambling in your state. In my area of Atlantic City, N.J., the endless promises made by the gambling industry never have been realized. Instead, we have had the extension of crime, drugs, corruption, and prostitution.

A.E. Lear
Atlantic City, N.J.

STICK TOGETHER

Editor:

I applaud you on your outspokenness against The Clarion-Ledger and Sid Salter (pro-gambling editor/columnist at The Clarion-Ledger). You were absolutely right about the owners of casinos.

Having casinos on the water has for a long time been a deterrent to their spread. Now our state leaders have given them a free reign. What's to keep them from building "just off" the lakes of Arkabutla, Sardis, Enid, Grenada, and Ross Barnett reservoirs?

I lived in Coahoma County, which got a casino. I'm proud to say that I voted against it. They told us our taxes would go down, but taxes went up 14% in one year. The next year, they reevaluated property so they could raise taxes again. Taxes have been raised twice that I know of, since I moved.

They said it would help the unemployment rate. Coahoma County has the highest unemployment in the state, according to a recent article in The Clarion-Ledger entitled, It's a war up there. The casinos haven't helped much.

When you look at the stats of the vote, if the 10 Baptists in the House of Representatives and the eight Baptists in the Senate who voted for inland casinos had voted against

them, the vote would have gone the other way. Maybe we should encourage Baptists to stick together more.

I know we are free-willed people and I wouldn't have it any other way, but we might get things a little more biblical if we were more committed. Keep up the good work!

Jenelle Chrestman
Bruce

SUPPORTING VICE

Editor:

The vote counts on casino relocation were an eye-opener for me. I, a Rankin County Republican and Mississippi Baptist, expected (Representative) John Moore and (Senator) Dean Kirby, both Republican Mississippi Baptists, to vote against relocation. I was shocked and disappointed.

I confess that I was surprised at the number of Democrats voting against the relocation. I applaud them! I took certain labels at face value. I will now cast a wider net. We should hold elected leaders accountable with our votes, especially when they vote counter to our values.

I applaud you for pointing out Governor Barbour's disappointing failure to live up to assurances he gave us when he needed our votes. He will never get my vote again on the state or national level. Lest anyone blame you, I decided this as soon as he began signaling where he stood on relocation to the Legislature.

Supporting casinos on the basis of jobs is like supporting a brothel because people in town need the work. You can use the same arguments to support any vice: 1) People are doing it anyway. 2) Since people are doing it anyway, we might as well legalize and tax it. 3) It will create jobs and the taxes will help children and the elderly. 4) Anyone against legalization is against jobs, children, and the elderly.

These arguments were used for both liquor and gambling. They could be used for legalizing drugs, prostitution, or any other vice — and likely will be.

Ric Cochran
Brandon

SADDENED

Editor:

I was saddened by your editorial (Ashamed of themselves? Not likely, October 27). I share your concern about gambling in Mississippi. I have friends whose lives have been wrecked by their addiction to gambling. I know that you conscientiously oppose anything that might expand the gambling industry in our state. So do I.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that you came close to violating your paper's own guidelines for letters to the editor which, wisely, prohibit personal attacks. You impugned the integrity of people who disagree with you on this important issue, and indirectly you implicated the churches where they hold membership.

This was a difficult issue. The only two lawmakers that I know personally on your list of those you say should be ashamed are Greg Snowden and Ed Morgan. I do not believe that either of them would vote in violation of his conscience. It is simply not fair to say that allowing the casinos to move inland 800 feet is the same as allowing gamblers to continue their relentless northward creep through our state.

I pray that we can all work harder to bring civility back to our discussion of issues that divide citizens, and yes, that divide Baptist Christians as well as other brothers and sisters in Christ.

Dick Allison
Hattiesburg

GOD IN CONTROL

Editor:

I want to say God bless you for your editorials on gambling. I am also grateful to my representative, Jim Beckett, and senator, Jack Gordon, for their "nay" votes on House Bill 45 (land-based casinos).

Any amount of money the state may receive from gambling will never restore the broken homes cause by gambling in our beloved state. God removed the casinos, so let's all pray He will keep them out. God is still on His throne and still in control.

It is my understanding that the real backers of the casinos are foreigners who do not share our Christian values. I pray that someone can tell them of Jesus Christ before it is too late.

Karenza Spratlin
Calhoun City

DO THE MATH

Editor:

I thank you for so boldly addressing the gambling issue. I am very disappointed in the senators and representatives that you named in the October 27 issue (who voted for land-based gambling). Those 18 Baptists are the ones who let the casinos expand their territory. My math tells me that had these 10 representatives and eight senators, who claim to be Baptist, voted against the bill it would have failed by 50-63 in the House and by 21-29 in the Senate.

My prayer is that these 18 Baptists will see you as their Nathan, who was sent to minister to King David (2 Samuel 12). These 18 Baptists may have had such little faith that they don't believe God can bless Mississippi without us holding hands with Satan. I live in Greenville, and I see and hear so many local stories of lives and families ruined by the casinos here.

Keep up the good work.

Paul Henry
Greenville

HAPPY CAMPER

Editor:

I am a happy camper when I witness Christian leadership communicating biblical truth and principle with courage and specificity. May I express a "trinity" of praise!

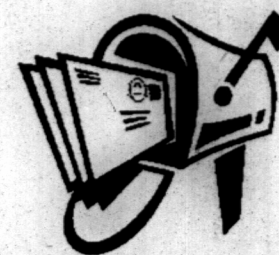
First, Mr. Editor: Thank you for the manner in which you revealed the voting records of our Mississippi senators and representatives on House Bill 45 (for or against land-based gambling). Thank you for letting the chips fall where they may.

Second, Jim Futral: Thank you for your candid, prophetic, and forthright article entitled, Welcome to Barbourville. Thank you for the deliberate way you accentuated the positive right and underscored the negative wrong. Thank you for stating high standards of wisdom and common sense which, unfortunately, too few choose to embrace.

Third, Jimmy Porter: Thank you for your article entitled, House Bill 45, which forcefully described the status quo of our Mississippi constituents. The greed of the gambling industry, coupled with the gambling mania of the people, make very comfortable bedfellows. Your plea for improved communication between "true" statesmen and better-informed citizens will truly improve our political scene.

By all means, we should sincerely thank our senators and representatives who voted "no" to House Bill 45. In the face of criticism and great pressure, they had the courage to vote their conscience and commitment.

Clarence E. Young
Brandon



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.



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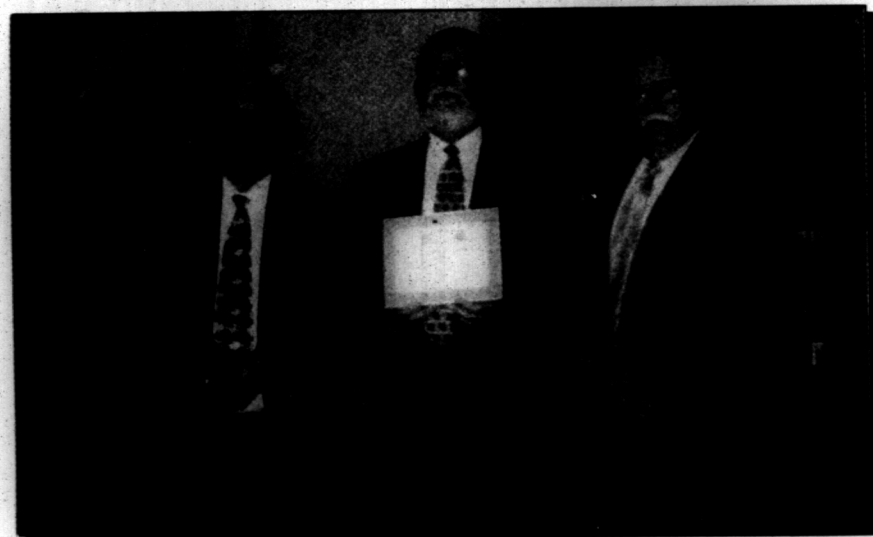
JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Baby Dedication, Homewood Church, Homewood



2. Operation Christmas Child, Stanton Church, Natchez



3. Ordination of Windham, Crossroads Church, Petal



4. WMU Grandmother Recognition, Itawamba Association

1. **Homewood Church, Homewood**, recently held a baby dedication. Shown are the participants.

2. **Stanton Church, Natchez**, collected 53 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Shown are the GAS, RAs, Acteens, and Mission Friends who participated.

3. **Crossroads Church, Petal**, ordained Jimmie Windham as their new pastor Aug. 14. Shown are Bob Robinson, Windham, and Marion Yonce.

4. **Itawamba Association** recognized their associational WMU Grandmother at their fall meeting. Shown are Kay Graham, IBA WMU director, Louise Grimes (56 consecutive years in WMU), and Marc Howard, AMD.

5. **Reeds Chapel Church, Stewart**, ordained Tim Mitchell, Jerry Mitchell, and Ray Reed as deacons. Shown are pastor Johnny Lollar, Tim Mitchell, Jerry Mitchell, and Reed.

6. The youth of **Pleasant Hill Church, New Albany**, held a baked potato lunch as a fund raiser. For raising over \$1,000, youth pastor Mike Morton dressed as a potato for Sunday night services.

7. **Ackerman Church, Ackerman**, honors its Misson Friends. Shown are the children taking a fruit basket to a shut-in.

8. **Hebron Church, Clay County**, will have a pastor's benefit supper and bazaar Dec. 3, 5:30 p.m., including a spaghetti supper, homemade crafts, and music with Sacred Heart and The Watsons. Tickets, \$5, or a love offering. Call (601) 494-7513 for information.

9. **New Hope Church, Foxworth**, will host Matt Williams, foreign missionary, Dec. 7, 6:30 p.m. Supper at 5:30 p.m.

10. **Algoma Church, Algoma**, will host their 14th annual drive-through Nativity Dec. 9-10, 6-9 p.m. There is no charge.

11. **Immanuel Church, Greenwood**, has moved to its new location at 916 Medallion Drive. Tommy Williams was voted on by the church to come as pastor.

12. **Calvary Church, Saratoga**, is sponsoring a rummage sale Dec. 3, 6 a.m., with proceeds going toward the building fund.



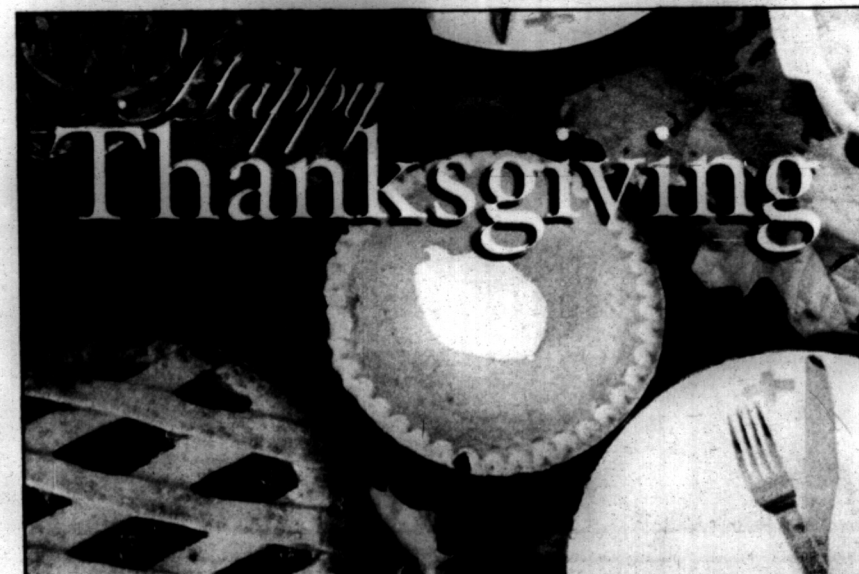
5. Deacon Ordination, Reeds Chapel Church, Stewart



6. Youth Potato Luncheon, Pleasant Hill Church, New Albany



7. Mission Friends Honored, Ackerman Church, Ackerman



JUST FOR THE RECORD



13. Graduation, Christian Women's Job Corps, Simpson County

13. Shown is the first graduation class of the **Christian Women's Job Corps of Simpson County**. They are Carla Williams, Laura Swalm, Rosie Wilson, Renarda Rosse, and Denise Mack. Also shown are coordinators Johnnie Eavenson, Toni Walker, and Shirley Maddox.

14. Leon Holley, **Vaiden Church, Vaiden**, is shown dedicating 340 shoe boxes filled with toys, school supplies, and personal items donated by the church membership to Operation Christmas Child.

15. **Kirkville Church, Itawamba Association**, kicked off its Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering Sept. 25. Shown are Carlene Spigner, Kirkville, Kay Graham, Louise Grimes (as Margaret Lackey), and Jackey Laney, pastor.

16. **Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc Association**, recently ordained Jonathan Coker as deacon. Shown are Coker, Amanda Coker, and Rex Ard, pastor.

17. **Bethel Church, Water Valley**, ordained Laramie Minga to the ministry Oct. 30. Shown are James Edwards, pastor, and Minga.

18. **Moak's Creek Church, Summit**, celebrated its 135th homecoming Oct. 30. Shown are Michael Alexander and Larry Holmes.

19. **Fellowship Church, Starkville**, recently ordained George (Dink) O'Brian, Jr., as a deacon. Shown are pastor Dustin Stockstill, O'Brian, and Denise O'Brian.

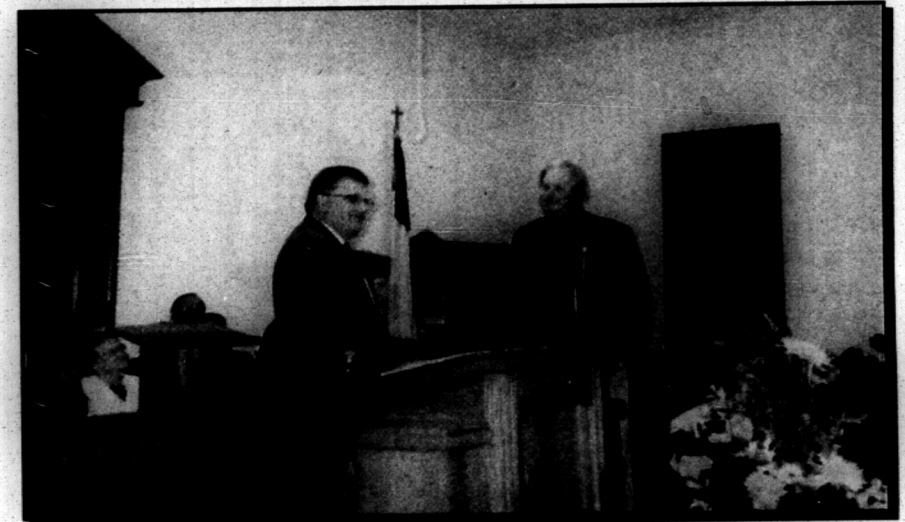
20. The Itawamba Association held its WMU Fall Conference at **New Home Church**, focusing on Christ Followers Involved in Disaster Relief. Shown are Jane Burns, Evelyn Williams, Kay Graham, Brenda Jones, Kathy Burns, and Mike Thorn.

21. **First Church, Jackson**, is sponsoring Reflections on a Celebration, a gathering to honor departed friends and loved ones, Dec. 13, 6 p.m., in the church chapel.

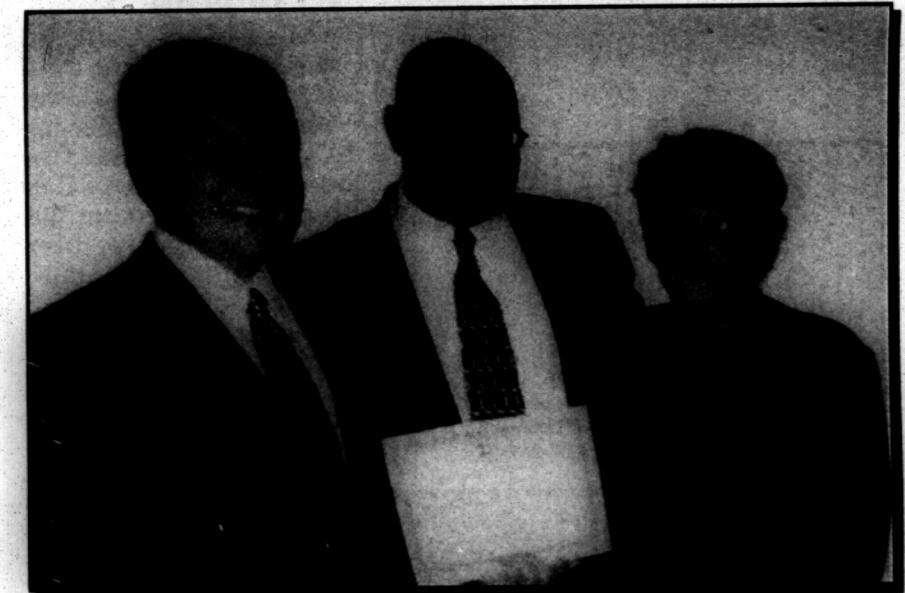
22. The RAs and GAs of **North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton**, will have a bake sale Dec. 3, 1-4 p.m., with proceeds going toward the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.



17. Deacon Ordination, Bethel Church, Water Valley



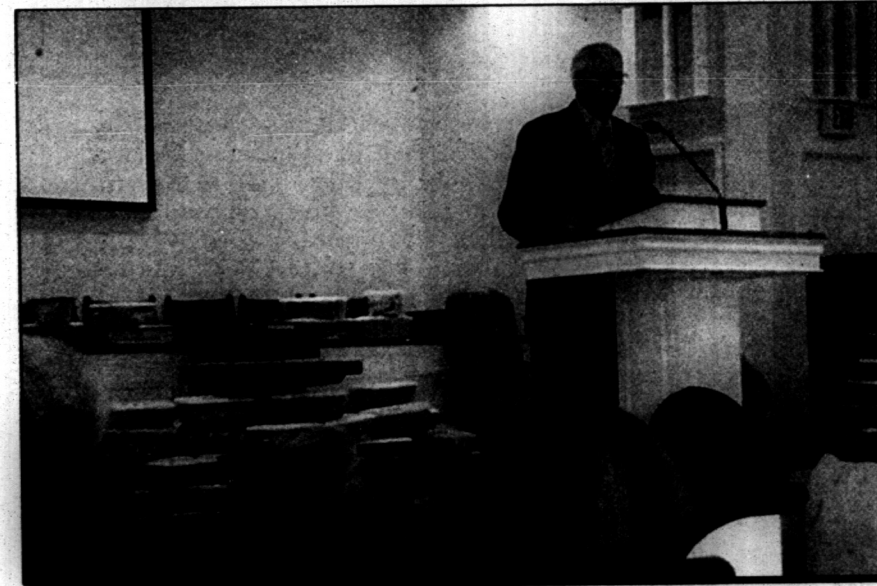
18. Steeple Dedication, Moak's Creek Church, Moak's Creek



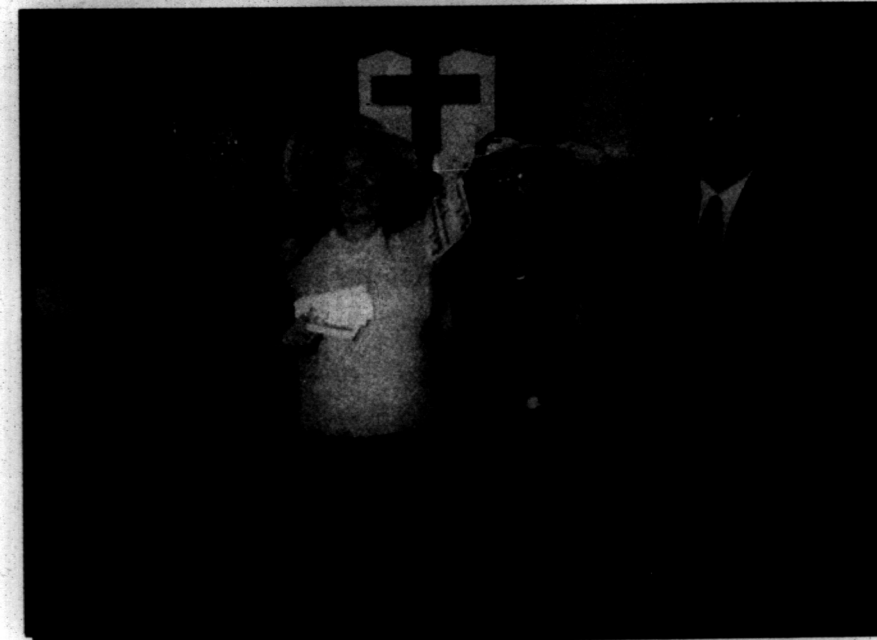
19. Deacon Ordination, Fellowship Church, Starkville



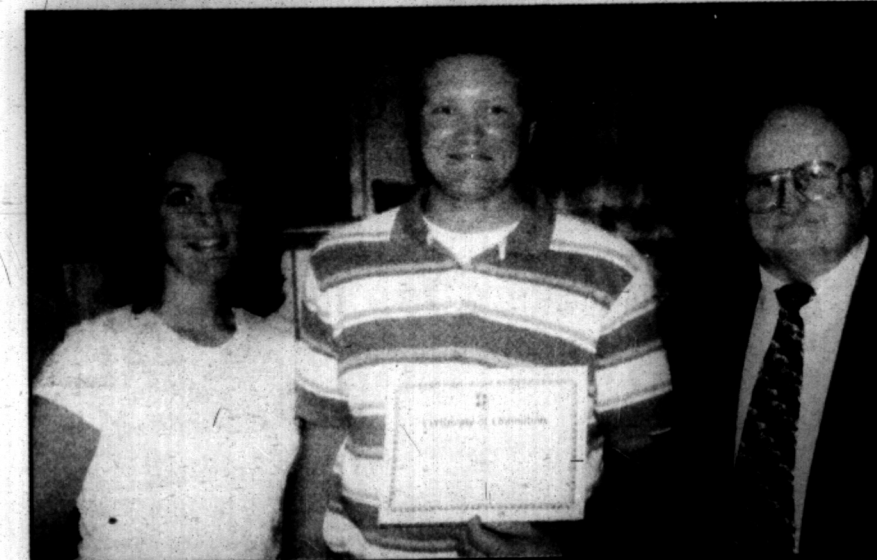
20. WMU Fall Conference Attendees, Itawamba Association



14. Operation Christmas Child, Vaiden Church, Vaiden



15. Margaret Lackey Kickoff, Kirkville Church, Itawamba Assn.



16. Deacon Ordination, Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc Assn.

Bibliocipher

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LSO AP XLBO YT YAPF
LEE, BQ LSJ FLS HBEE
NTPF LQYPW FP, EPY ABF
OPSJ ABFXPEQ, LSO YLDP
ZU ABX NWTXX OLBEJ,
LSO QTEETH FP.

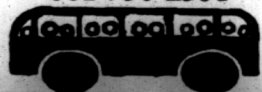
EZDP SBSP: YHPSYJ-YAWPP

Clue: X = S

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans Eight: Eleven.

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25. Missions Goal Exceeded,
Liberty Church, Liberty

23. **East McComb Church, McComb**, will change its name to New Heights Church, and is moving from its present location on Pearl River Avenue, McComb, to Highway 98 west of Summit Dec. 4. The church's final homecoming will be Nov. 27, 10 a.m.-noon.

24. **Bellevue Church, Pontotoc Association**, recently ordained Brett Landon Williams to the gospel ministry. Shown are Tommy Inmon, pastor, Don Wilson, Williams, and Lee Graham.



24. Deacon Ordination, Bellevue Church, Pontotoc Association

25. **Liberty Church, Liberty**, received \$2,587.35, exceeding a missions offering goal of \$2,000.

Shown are James Sadler, pastor, and Betty Duck, WMU director.

COLLEGE NEWS



Mississippi
College

1. Robert and Rebecca Watson, of Watson Ford, Inc., are honored at the ribbon cutting ceremony Oct. 20 for the naming of the Watson Cross Country Course on the Mississippi College Choctaw Trails property. Shown are Robert Watson, Rebecca Watson, and president Lee Royce.
2. The Mississippi College Department of Music will present the 20th Annual Festival of Lights, which will be December 1-3. The program begins at 7:30 p.m. in Provine Chapel on the campus of Mississippi College. For the 20th anniversary, more than 600 alumni of the choir have been invited to return for this year's anniversary concert weekend. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for students, and may be purchased at the door or in the MC music office. Proceeds from ticket sales will assist the choir with expenses for their concert engagement in Carnegie



Watsons Honored, WCC

Hall in April 2006. For more information, please call the MC music office at (601) 925-3440.

3. The Mississippi College Career Services Center is gearing up for its tenth annual MC Career Day on February 7, 2006, 11:00 a.m. Career Day is open to all employers from mainstream businesses, school districts, and healthcare providers, looking for top quality employees, as

well as graduate programs recruiting students. Visit the Employer section of the website at <http://www.mc.edu/career> to register on-line to attend Career Day 2006. For more information on MC Career Day, contact the Career Services Center at (601) 925-2901 or email at nyberg@mc.edu.

4. **Blue Mountain College** is now offering an intensive term in between the fall and spring semesters, January 2-6. The J-Term offers students the opportunity to earn academic credit in an accelerated forum in which classes meet seven hours a day for five days. Registration for J-Term is Nov. 28-Dec. 2. For more information, contact the Office of Admissions at 800.235.0136 or visit www.bmc.edu.

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STAFF CHANGE



Boone

Dan Boone has resigned as pastor of **First Church, Louisville**, to enter full-time evangelism, effective Nov. 13. Boone can be contacted at 28620 North Main St., Daphne, AL, 36526. Phone (251) 626-0853.



Wiggins

Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc, has called Tommy Wiggins as minister of music and youth.

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White Crosses Represent Fifty Million American Babies



By Lee Yancey

We are approaching the 33rd anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision. Mired in controversy, *Roe* holds that a woman has a constitutionally protected right to choose abortion in the early stages of pregnancy. After thirty-three years, let us reflect on the fifty million babies whose hearts were beating but who were violently denied the chance to take their first breath. Fifty million children are alive today in the presence of Almighty God. Even as God knew Jeremiah before He created him in his mother's womb, God knew each of these fifty million innocents, personally and intimately. Even as God had a purpose for Jeremiah's life before he was born, God had a purpose for each of these precious infants. King David said in

Psalm 139:13-14, "For you formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

Clearly, God, the giver of life, is grieved over the taking of innocent life. The legalization of abortion has been a disgrace to our nation for thirty-three years now. How have we become a nation whose motto is "Save the trees and kill the children?" How can we keep silent when ten abortions are performed every day in Mississippi? Thankfully, we are making progress as a state and as a nation. Mississippi is now the most pro-life state in the union. Over the past ten years, at least fifteen laws restricting abortion have been passed by pro-life legislators and governors, both Republicans and Democrats. In 2000, Mississippi had four abor-



tion clinics; today there is only one. Nationally, the number of abortions has been declining for the last ten years. In 2000, a total of 1.31 million pregnancies ended in abortion, down from a high of 1.61 million in 1990.

President Bush has now appointed Judge Samuel Alito to be the next Supreme Court Justice replacing the retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Justice Alito, if confirmed, may prove to be the deciding vote that overturns *Roe vs. Wade*. If that happens, Mississippi and all other states will decide for themselves whether or not to keep abortion legal or to ban abortion from its borders. I believe Mississippi may be the first abortion-free state if *Roe* is overturned.

In order to proclaim our message that all life is precious to God, will you join churches across the state of Mississippi by creating a display of white crosses somewhere on your church property? Since there have been fifty million innocents lost to abortion since 1973, we are asking that you display fifty crosses, January 14-22, 2006; one cross for every million babies. Each church is asked to construct and paint their own crosses and to videotape your church members and church sign as you place them in the ground. Send a copy of the videotape to the Christian Action Commission so that we can edit it with footage from other churches and present an encouraging pro-life video to the 2006 Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Another pro-life event is happening in January as well. On Thursday, January 19, 2006, the Christian Action Commission invites you to participate in a

Pro-Life Conference. Our special guest will be Peter A. Samuelson, Esq., President of Americans United for Life (AUL). The conference will be held at the Baptist Building and conferences will take place at 1:00 p.m., 2:30 p.m., banquet at 6:30 p.m., and conference at 7:00 p.m. The topics that will be covered are issues that the Mississippi Legislature will be addressing in 2006: Euthanasia, *in vitro* Fertilization, Cloning, and Destructive Embryo Research. Cost for the banquet is \$10 per person. You can obtain further information by calling Rita Wood at (601) 292-3329 or by logging on to www.christianaction.com. Please RSVP by Thursday, January 12, 2006. Thank you for taking a stand. Pray with me that we can see the end of legalized abortion.

Yancey is a consultant with the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at lyancey@christianaction.com.

MS POSITIONS

FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH IN JACKSON is taking applications for a minister of music, who is interested in teaching adults and children enjoyment of church music as well as wonderful songs. Faith is located on the corner of Northside and Manhattan in North Jackson. For more information, call Sammy Nicholson at (601) 368-2983.

MINISTER OF YOUTH: GOSS BAPTIST CHURCH, near Columbia, Miss., is seeking part-time/bi-vocational minister of youth. Please send resumes to Goss Baptist Church, attn: Donovan McComb at 718 Broad Street, Columbia, MS 39429 or contact him at (601) 444-0000.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF PICAYUNE, MISS., is seeking a full-time children's minister. Please send resume to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 477, Picayune, MS 39466, attn: personnel committee.

FULL-TIME PASTOR: AUBURN BAPTIST CHURCH, east of Tupelo, Miss., is accepting resumes for a full-time pastor. Please direct all inquiries to pastor search committee, 1138 Road 931, Tupelo, MS 38804 or email auburnbaptistchurch@comcast.net. Interested applicants may also call for additional information (662) 842-5638.

YALOBUSHA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION is now accepting resumes for an AMD (part-time). Deadline for accepting is December 18, 2005. Please send resume to Yalobusha Baptist Association, attn: Bro. Harvey Vance, personnel director, P.O. Box 447, Coffeeville, MS 38922.

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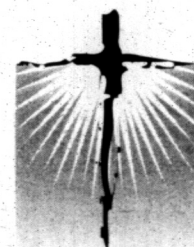
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BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR: if interested, please send resume to pastor search committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 6252 Memphis Arlington Road, Bartlett, TN 38135-2462.

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THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

Nov. 7–Nov. 20

HONORS

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The Baptist Children's Village
would like to announce
the launching of our new
and improved website.

www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

Please take time to explore it.

You will find new features such as:

- BCV staff contact list
- Current volunteer needs
- Current news
- Admissions information
- Online donations
- And much more!

Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Project



The Baptist Children's
Village for the 3rd year will
be partnering with
Samaritan's Purse, an
international relief organi-
zation headed by Rev.

Franklin Graham. This project provides shoeboxes filled with gifts and candy for children in need around the world. These gifts are given and the gospel is shared with children who have never received a Christmas gift or heard the truth about Jesus Christ. This project is also a mission project for The Baptist Children's Village residents. Many the residents volunteer in the relay center and are learning how important it is to serve others. The collection dates are November 14–21. For more information contact Chrystelle Thames at The Baptist Children's Village at 601.922.2242 or cthames@baptistchildrensvillage.com or go to www.samaritanaspurse.org.

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Honor the Sovereign Lord

Job 42:1-13, 16-17

I have twin boys that are 15 months old. They are living proof that everyone is different. One is outgoing while the other is withdrawn. One has blond hair and brown eyes, while one has brown hair and blue eyes. One needs a large amount of attention while the other is independent. They are two individuals that are extremely different. One thing that is identical however, is that they both want to do exactly what they want to when they want to. Most of us as children of God, like children of men, want to go our own way and do our own thing. The sovereign God of the universe however, holds us accountable for submitting to Him as Lord. The question arises, "How can I honor God in spite of suffering and loss?" Job's life story gives us some insight on how we can honor God as Sovereign, no matter what life brings.

I. Submission, 42:1-6

Job's submission to God began with a realization (v1-4). Job quietly bowed before God and admitted that He was sovereign. He acknowledged that God could do anything and that nothing He purposed to do could be changed. In spite of the fact that He was still diseased, childless, and without his possessions, Job humbled himself before God, realized His sovereignty, and submitted to Him completely.

Not only did Job realize God's sovereignty, he also recognized God's superiority (v5). He remembered all that he had heard about God, but now he had grasped the greatness and majesty of God. With his own eyes Job had seen God in a whole new way. This realization and recognition led to Job's repen-



Ivy

tance of his sin (v6). As Job submitted to God, Satan who thought that Job's faith could be destroyed through trials and tribulation, was proven wrong. Job's friends were proven wrong for assuming Job's torment was God's judgment. Job however, was also proven to be wrong and was brought to repentance. By repenting, Job was not agreeing with his friends' accusations that he had brought on his own suffering by committing some terrible sin. He was repenting of the foolish and presumptuous things he had said about God and God's injustice. Job gained peace by submitting to the Lord even though he did not have all the answers to his questions or relief from his sufferings. We are to acknowledge God as the sovereign Lord of all and to submit to Him even when we cannot explain all of His ways.

II. Supplication, 42:7-9

Job is referred to, by God, as the servant of God four times

in these three verses. The only indication of Job's service to God is his service as a prayer warrior. God instructs Job's friends to go and utilize this service from Job to restore their relationship with him and God.

God gave them a word of correction (v7) and vindicated Job from the accusations of his friends. God came to them as individuals and clearly informed them of the error of their judgments upon Job. God decisively corrected them. Not only did He correct them, but He also commanded them (v8). He commanded them to go to Job, offer a burnt offering, and be prayed for by Job. God corrected and commanded Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad and they promptly complied (v9). Job obeyed God by interceding for his friends who had spoken falsely about him and God. When we are truly submissive to God, we are in a position to pray effectively for others.

III. Satisfaction, 42:10-13, 16-17

By submitting to God, Job enjoyed God's blessings and

found full satisfaction. According to verse 10, Job was blessed with twice as much as he had before. He received twice as many sheep, camels, oxen, and donkeys. Job had the same amount of children however. Does this contradict verse 10? Absolutely not. It is important for us to understand that while Job had lost all of his possessions, he didn't really lose his children at all. They had simply relocated to another destination: heaven! What satisfaction Job must have experienced to realize that God had never left him nor forsaken him, that this world cannot take anything from us that God cannot restore, and that those who have died in the Lord are not really lost at all, they are just relocated. By honoring God through submitting to Him, serving Him, and being satisfied in Him, we can enjoy the blessings and satisfaction of living in fellowship with Him as Savior and Lord.

Ivy is pastor of Fairfield Church, Moselle.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

"Loved By God"

Romans 8:28-39



Davis

God's love is marvelous! I can look around me and see so many intricate things He's created; the keen eye of a bird, the soft fur of a kitten, the sweet smell of a flower, and leaves changing to gold, brown, red, and yellow.

Our first beautiful daughter was born on a Sunday in April. We were so happy to have her. The first time I held her in my arms I knew I had seen a miracle. I told her about Jesus and how much He loved her. When we decided to add another child to our family, I often wondered if I'd have enough love to share with another child. I forgot the pain of delivery when I counted all the little fingers and toes of our second beautiful daughter. The first time I cuddled her in my arms I told her about Jesus and that He loved

her very much. I found out that I had plenty of love to share. I didn't have to wonder about my love supply when

God gave us a son. I kissed his little cheek and shared about Jesus' love for him. I began to think of how many "children of God" there were, and how God always shows them abundant, overflowing love.

No Worries (Romans 8:28-30) — The promise in verse twenty-eight is a favorite of many people. When things "work together", it is because God is in control. And, when things are in proper order for a Christian, we never have to worry, because everything will move a lot smoother. The Holy Spirit works to bring about God's purpose in our lives.

The result may not always work out the way we planned, but the outcome will be the best for us. "Christians are said to be called because God has invited them by His prior divine knowledge" (Barnes). We have a choice whether to accept that call or not.

The word, predestinate, evidently means to determine a special purpose beforehand. Verse twenty-nine shows that the reason for predestinating is that Christians will be conformed and made in the likeness of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Verse thirty shows the order of His plan for our lives: predestined, called, justified, then, glorified. May we not disappoint God.

No Doubts (Romans 8:31-32) — God's love for His people and His goodness to them is evident by the giving of His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. We can never doubt,

that because of His great love, He'll be generous to us in other things we want or need. As for the question in verse thirty-one, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" we might reply: "If God is for us...what difference does it make who is against us?" We should never doubt God's care through the Holy Spirit's guidance in our lives.

No Charges (Romans 8:33-34) — "To lay charge" is a legal term that means you are entering the fact that a debt is owed on a person's record. No one has reason to accuse, when the debt has already been paid by Christ's death on the cross. God has justified His child. (v.33) Jesus is the only one who has the right to condemn. He is the One Who died, was buried, has been raised from the dead and is now at the right hand of His Father interpreting our prayers to God. (v.34)

No Separation (Romans 8:35-39) — Nothing can separate us

from the love of God in Christ. Not our health; God is by our bedside. Not terrorist attacks; if we die, we see God face to face. Not hurricanes now or tornadoes in the future; Christians are eternally safe in the arms of God. Not people or any earthly creature; God has the power to guard us and not allow anything to separate us from Him. Being loved by God is the feelings we have in our hearts; when we read His word, when we listen for Him in prayer, and when we smile and remember His personal care for us. As children, when we girls found a wild flower, we removed each petal as we chanted our hopes for a future boyfriend: "He loves me, he loves me not, he loves me...". How disappointing to take the last petal and say, "He loves me not". Well, guess what? We never have to be disappointed about that with God. His love is immeasurable! It's everlasting...

Davis is a member of First Church, McComb.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the **who, what, when, where** details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

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All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

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THE BAPTIST
Record

Discoveries stirring religious archeology community

JERUSALEM (BP) — National headlines announcing three recent archaeological discoveries not only reaffirm the historical trustworthiness of the Bible's narratives, they also highlight the important role biblical archaeology plays in Old and New Testament studies, according to Southern Baptist scholars Eric Mitchell and Steven Ortiz.

• The New York Times reported November 7 that prisoners digging foundations for the expansion of Megiddo Prison north of Jerusalem in the Valley of Armageddon uncovered ruins of what might be the earliest Christian church discovered in the Holy Land.

Intricate mosaics dating to the third century A.D. bear inscriptions in Greek. The Israel Antiquities Authority has preliminarily rendered the translation of one inscription as reading, "The God-loving Aketous has offered this table to the God Jesus Christ, as a memorial."

• On November 9, The Times reported from the site of Tel Zayit, just south of Jerusalem, about the discovery of some scribbling of a scribe who was practicing writing the Hebrew alphabet — an abecedar — on the wall of an ancient building. By analyzing stratification, the position, and depth of the writing, archaeologists have dated the abecedar to the 10th century B.C.

• Also on November 9, The Jerusalem Post reported that "a very small ceramic shard unearthed by Bar-Ilan University archaeologists digging at Tell es-Safi, the biblical



MAJOR FIND — A prisoner at a facility at Megiddo, near Jerusalem, cleans the remains of a mosaic floor of what might be the world's oldest Christian church. The find is one of several archaeological discoveries reported from the Holy Land in early November. (BP photo by Avi Ohayon/Flash 90)

city Gath of the Philistines... contains the earliest known Philistine inscription ever to be discovered, [and] mentions two names that are remarkably similar to the name Goliath."

Steven Ortiz, associate professor of archeology and director of New Orleans Seminary's Center for Archeological Research, cautioned that such new discoveries will need to undergo further examination, and Christians must be careful not to jump to conclusions before a certain amount of consensus among authorities emerges.

Ortiz said he does not doubt the authenticity of these recent finds. However, he tempers his excitement with the reminder that, in archaeology, first impressions do not always turn out to be correct after further investigation.

"There are many finds that substantiate the biblical text," Ortiz noted, "but there are several sensational finds recently that are forgeries."

Eric Mitchell, assistant professor of archaeology and biblical backgrounds at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, agreed that Bible students must be careful not to draw quick conclusions.

For example, in its report about the discovery of the early church in Megiddo, The New York Times quoted anthropologist Joe Zias as doubting whether a Romanized mosaic would have been found in a church in that location in the third century A.D.

"My gut feeling is that we are looking at a Roman building that may have been con-

verted to a church at a later date," Zias told The Times.

Mitchell acknowledged Zias' concerns, but he also noted it is possible that the original builder of the mosaic at Megiddo was a Roman who was willing to take a strong stand for his faith.

"These finds help us flesh out the climate, geography, society, educational system and other factors and influences that the Bible emerged from," Mitchell said. "Even if it turns out that this find in Megiddo wasn't used as a church until a later time, we can learn something from that, too."

"The reliability of its dating brings us back to the debate of how literate were the people of Israel during this time. Here is a small, regional site where people were apparently practicing writing," Ortiz pointed out.

"Many biblical scholars claim that the Bible was an elitist document that only a small handful of trained priests could read. They question whether commoners had access to the text. This moves the debate along, suggesting there was a higher level of literacy among the Israelites than is normally assumed by scholars," he said.

The recent archaeological finds, Mitchell said, "are only small pieces of evidence, but when we start adding up all the small pieces like these that support the Bible's narratives, it becomes more and more difficult for doubters or unbelievers to argue against the accuracy of Scripture."

Welch continuing to push 'Everyone Can' baptism drumbeat

OWENSBORO, Ky. (BP) — Bobby Welch, continuing his visits to churches across the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), has kept his focus on urging Christians to get out of their pews and into the streets where neighbors, family members, and strangers are searching for meaning and purpose in life.

The SBC president and pastor of First Church, Daytona Beach, Fla., speaking during a two-day evangelism rally at Pleasant Grove Church in Owensboro, Ky., underscored the words in 2 Peter 3 that God does not want anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance.

The "Everyone Can" rally included one baptism — of a college girl who manages the local Arby's restaurant — to celebrate the church ordinance to which Welch is urging Southern Baptists give heightened attention.

Toward a goal of one million baptisms, Welch has asked Baptist associations to hold two baptism rallies by next September and for churches to emphasize baptism on November 27, on Easter Sunday and on September 30, 2006.

Churches are asked to register monthly baptism updates and testimonies using the "One Million Baptisms!" hotlink found in the left column on the www.everyonecan.net website.

Ken Stone, pastor of Pleasant Grove Church, told Baptist Press that Welch's message was "strictly evangelistic, about how we need to be out there like a stop sign warning people to get off the road to hell. It was a great, great sermon."

"The altar was full of people that were praying for friends and family that they know need to be saved. It was very powerful."

Before Welch spoke on November 10, Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans, addressed the congregation Wednesday night. Using Acts 1 as his text, he underscored the importance of being empowered by the Holy Spirit to go out and make a difference for Christ in the world.

"He talked about how the early believers were a new people with a new power and a new purpose," Stone said. "They went out into the world and turned the whole place upside down, just starting with that 120 in the upper room."

Stone said Luter was a tremendous preacher before, but now that his church building was severely damaged in the flood that followed Hurricane Katrina and his 7,000 members have scattered throughout the country, he is preaching with more passion and urgency than ever before.

The first night of the rally, when Luter spoke, the church was packed with about 300 people who heard Luter tell about the early church.

"He geared his message to encourage the church to be the kind of people that are energized to go out," Stone said.

"We have the power, as it says in Acts 1:8. We are the ones that need to do it. He talked about how people would see those that turned the world upside down in Acts 1 and say, 'There they are.' They didn't have buildings and budgets and they didn't have TVs and screens and all the things we have now. They just shared their faith with passion, and he said that's what we need to get back to doing ourselves."

Of the messages that Welch and Luter delivered, Stone noted that it's a good day in the SBC when the key leaders are so burdened for the lost.

"Both of them stirred a lot of people and encouraged them to be soul-winners, to get out there, back to the job we're supposed to be doing," the pastor said.

"I think that's so good for our convention. After all the fights we've had and that kind of thing, it's really encouraging to have a president and

prominent people in our convention that are on the track to getting church members to be witnesses for the Lord."

Welch, a decorated Vietnam War veteran, addressed a community-wide Veterans Day celebration the next morning.

Several weeks ago when the event was being planned, Stone suggested to the organizers that they invite Welch to address the crowd because he knew he was a dynamic speaker and motivator. Then he asked Welch to come a day early and preach at the church for what would become the evangelism rally.

"It just all fell into place," Stone said. "Dr. Luter had said he would come on a Sunday, but something came up and he asked if he could come on a Wednesday, so we had him come just before Dr. Welch and we made it a two-day event."

Stone said Welch shared his testimony with the veterans, including events in his life leading up to his deployment, his combat injury and near-death experience in Vietnam and his life on the other side of the war.

"There were probably at least a couple hundred veterans there, not to mention all their families," Stone said. "That gym was packed and just hanging on his every word. It was great."